



Bidline Bulletin- Christmas Bidding Edition
FAQ 19.11

Q: I used a monthly paid bidding service, is that recommended?

A: There is nothing that prohibits the use of a professional PBS bidding service; however, **buyer beware!** We have received several concerning reports from pilots who have utilized the bidding service “**PBS Bidding Solutions.**” After looking at the work they have done for some of our members, we find their work to be largely unsatisfactory. Below is an example of a bid created by PBS Bidding Solutions. If your bid looks anything like this, we suggest you contact the PBS Trainers immediately so that we can get your bid fixed in time for December bidding.

34	Avoid Pairings If Pairing Check-Out Time > 12:00
35	Avoid Pairings If Pairing Check-Out Time > 13:00
36	Avoid Pairings If Pairing Check-Out Time > 14:00
37	Avoid Pairings If Pairing Check-Out Time > 15:00
38	Avoid Pairings If Pairing Check-Out Time > 16:00
39	Avoid Pairings If Pairing Check-Out Time > 17:00
40	Avoid Pairings If Pairing Check-Out Time > 18:00
41	Avoid Pairings If Pairing Check-Out Time > 19:00
42	Avoid Pairings If Pairing Check-Out Time > 20:00
43	Avoid Pairings If Pairing Check-Out Time > 21:00
44	Avoid Pairings If Pairing Check-Out Time > 22:00
45	Avoid Pairings If Any Duty Legs (Counting Deadhead Legs) > 3 Legs
46	Avoid Pairings If Any Duty Legs > 3 Legs
47	Avoid Pairings If Total Legs In Last Duty (Counting Deadhead Legs) > 2 Legs
48	Avoid Pairings If Total Legs In Last Duty > 2 Legs
49	Avoid Pairings If Pairing Length > 3 Days If Total Legs In Last Duty (Counting Deadhead Legs) > 1 Legs
50	Avoid Pairings If Pairing Length > 3 Days If Total Legs In Last Duty > 1 Legs
51	Avoid Pairings If Deadhead Legs > 0 Legs
52	Avoid Pairings If Deadhead Legs > 1 Legs
53	Avoid Pairings If Any Sit Length > 002:00
54	Avoid Pairings If Carry Out > 0 Days
55	Avoid Pairings If Carry Out > 1 Days
56	Avoid Pairings If Carry Out > 2 Days
57	Avoid Pairings If Any Layover Of Duration < 014:00
58	Avoid Pairings If Any Layover Of Duration < 013:00
59	Avoid Pairings If Any Layover Of Duration < 012:00
60	Avoid Pairings If Any Layover Of Duration < 011:00

Take a moment to let the above sink in. In this bid group, there were a total of 45 *avoid statements* in conjunction with a mere 7 *award statements*. When applying the bid analyzer to this bid group, it returned **only** 12 preferred pairings operating a total of 24 times. It's clear from this analysis that there are too many *avoid statements* in the bid group. Furthermore, this award was affected by *Denial Mode*. In *Denial Mode*, *avoid statements* are removed and added back in one by one until a complete line is built. The result is the pilot possibly being awarded pairings they really didn't want. Quite simply, the bid technique used by PBS Bidding Solutions will never result in a successful outcome due to the large number of negative statements (i.e., avoids). ***Please exercise extreme caution if using this bidding service!***

While not prohibited, using a bid service should not be a place holder for a fundamental understanding of the N-PBS system. Additionally, the PBS Trainers provide the same service ***FREE OF CHARGE. This kind of assistance is one of the reasons that you pay dues.*** Anyone needing help assembling a bid or requiring feedback on an already created bid should email SPAPBSHelp@alpa.org and one of our PBS Trainers will assist you.

Q: I was unable to hold Thanksgiving off, are there any techniques that might help me with Christmas Day?

A: Holding Christmas Day off, or any holiday off for that matter, is something almost every pilot across all bases and at all seniority levels will be trying to achieve. With that, it is important to remember how N-PBS works and what parameters will be used by the company in order to protect their operation around the holiday.

For relatively senior line holders, a common strategy is to ask for weekends off in addition to Christmas Day. It is imperative to remember that NavBlue will always honor the required 4 days off (if not waived), even in the month-to-month transition (once you have started a day off sequence or have worked up to 6 days in a row). For those who worked over Thanksgiving or the last few days of November, remember that the 4 day off requirement will give you up to December 3rd or 4th off. This will eat into the first week of the month as well as limit the credit availability to fill that first week. Waiving to less than 4 days off can help set the cadence of trips in December to have enough credit built towards the particular credit threshold in the appropriate window, while preserving weekends off and a reasonable chance at Christmas off. For pilots believing they can hold both weekends off and Christmas off, that essentially means most of the 4th week of December is unavailable for assignment. In this case, a complete line must be built within the rest of the month and a waiver of the 4 days off may be required. Setting the minimum number of weekends to 2 or 3 will also allow the system to shed part or all of 1 or 2 weekends and improving ones chances of still having Christmas off with more of the rest of the months bid preferences as desired. The system will still try and give you as many weekends as it can.

For relatively junior line holders, keep in mind that December is a month where Regular Line holders can be unstacked up to 50%. It is also important to remember that stack heights (number of allowed open duty periods on a given day) can be set to as low as 5% of the number of regular lines. Finally, it should also be remembered that Reserve unstacking can affect up to 100% of Reserve line holders, which means the "I'll just bid reserve" strategy may not be successful in

securing December 25th free from duty. Since N-PBS awards in strict seniority order, once coverage awards (unstacking) begins for the Christmas holiday, every pilot who is legal and available to work Christmas Day from that point on will be unstacked on Christmas Day.

A pilot in the lower 50% of Regular Line holders should assume that they will be required to work Christmas Day. However, there are a few helpful strategies to keep in mind that when used can have minimal impact on pilot quality of life. Seeking out overnights on December 24-25 of certain length or in a specific city may be your best strategy.

- *“Award Pairings If Pairing Check Out Time Is (< or between) on December 25th.”* This satisfies the systems requirements to have the pilot work that particular day; in addition, it has the pilot ideally checking out early in the morning on Christmas Day. Furthermore, it should be mentioned that finding a trip that checks out after midnight of the 24th would also satisfy the requirement of working on Christmas Day.
- *“Award Pairings If Pairing Check In Time (> or between) on December 25th.”* This strategy again satisfies the system requirement to have the pilot working on Christmas Day. However, the pilot is controlling when they report for duty. In this case a late report in the evening after having the morning and afternoon free from duty.
- *“Award Pairings If Any Layover In XYZ And on December 25th And Starting at < hh:mm.”* This tactic allows the bidder to get a layover, which begins prior to a specific time, on Christmas Day in a Spirit city of their choosing. If this happens to be the pilots’ home, they have now made it possible to spend the holiday with their family. Furthermore, it also satisfies the system requirement that they work on Christmas.

For the above suggested bid lines, they should be placed right below the bid line asking for December 25th off. If it can honor the Prefer off, it will filter all pairings from those lines. If it cannot honor December 25th off, then the first request it sees will be the trips you prefer to work on that day. Implementing the above schemes can help to reduce the impact on pilot quality of life brought on by the increased Coverage Awards found in a holiday month.

For Reserve line holders, it is important to remember that all Reserve lines will have 18 days ON for December, which means 13 days off. Without waiving the 4 days off, it forces the system into a 6 on/4 off cadence with the variable being the beginning of the month and what day the 6 on/4 off can begin taking into account workdays from the last week of the previous month. This creates a bit of predictability and allows a bidder to use the CBA 4 day off restriction to dictate the schedule for the month. It also explains how a junior pilot ends up with days off a senior pilot requested. PBS is bound by CBA and FAR compliance. Asking for days off is fine, but make sure to mentally calculate how the system can mathematically build a complete and legal schedule.

Also, when using the Else Start Next command, remember it has to honor ALL the days listed on that specific line. Having multiple bid groups with different sets of days off or decreasing days off and an ESN command can be useful to try and get requested days off while preventing the

system from just awarding anything.

Additionally, waiving down to as low as 1 day off to help get requested days off doesn't always work in Reserve awards. The absence of the 4 day off requirement can expose more days to being assigned as Coverage Awards (unstacking) since the system is not bound by the required 6 on/4 off cadence and can now award days off spread throughout the month. Up to 100% of reserve lines can contain a Coverage Award, so a waiver of the 4 days off down to 1 can serve to allow more coverage awards in some instances.

For pilots with training in December: If you have training IN-BASE, NavBlue blocks the day or days from 00:00 on the first day until 23:59 on the last day. 12 hours rest is required before and after those times as defined by Section 11 of the CBA. Whether cherry picking trips or just attempting to work abutted to training this severely limits how trips or R days are assigned around the training event. Triggering required days off on one or both sides of that training can greatly affect how the rest of the month is awarded. This is a time where waiving to less than 4 days off may be ideal in assembling the schedule with respect to the rest of the month.

For pilots with out of base training, DH's are built into the training pairing and rest is based on normal rules, and not as critical.

For all bidders, remember that the order in which a bidder lists Prefer Off's in a bid sheet is crucial. NavBlue reads bid lines from the top down. If Christmas Day or any other specific day off is more important than weekends, make sure that is reflected in the order of the bid lines entered. Listing Prefer Off's in proper order will ensure that if PBS enters denial mode, it will shed a possible weekend before it gives up on a date most important.

A good way to prevent any unwanted surprises when building a bid line is to read it OUT LOUD to ensure that the proper criteria is selected. For example, ensuring proper use of a greater than (>) or less than (<) symbol, and not EXACTLY (=) when creating a bid line with a time criterion, or when asking for average daily CREDIT, not average daily BLOCK time. This is a simple technique to catch any errors your eyes might have missed.

Additionally, utilizing other Waive options, 1 off in 7 and No Same Day Duty Starts, can help with a tighter assembly of trips and make the difference in how the entire month is constructed. Again, it's all a strategy to help a bidder get what they want.

Lastly for all pilots, do not have a Clear Schedule and Start Next Bid Group or Else Start Next in you final pairings bid group and final reserve bid group. This continues to plague bids, and sends line holders to reserve, and reserves to schedules they otherwise didn't intend.

Q: I have a question regarding my PBS award after Final Schedule, who should I contact?

A: The correct venue for questions regarding anything relating to the PBS MOU or the N-PBS system should be directed first to SPAPBSHELP@alpa.org and next to the JPWG at SPAJPWG@alpa.org. Please refrain from emailing the Scheduling Committee as they are not the correct committee.

Q: The trial period per PBS MOU paragraph for blocks of reserve days has concluded. What will be the minimum number of reserve days in a block moving forward?

A: Per PBS MOU paragraph 66, the Company will now set the minimum number of days for blocks of reserve days at 4 (four) or fewer days. Pilots should refer to the “PBS Reserve Line Information” section of the NavBlue Info Tab for specific information on the minimum block of reserve days in your domicile.